What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method comprising:

2   receiving on a first switching device a message from

3   a second switching device that indicates to slow packet

4   transmission to the second switching device.

1   2.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

2   slowing packet transmission from the first switching

3   device to a congested port in the second switching

4   device.

1   3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a

2   congested port in the second switching device.

1   4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a

2   port in the first switching device transmitting packets to a

3   congested port in the second switching device.

1   5.   A method comprising:

2   transmitting from a first switching device to a

3   second switching device a message that indicates to slow

4   packet transmission to the first switching device.

1   6.   The method of claim 5 further comprising:

2   transmitting the message from the second switching

3   device to a third switching device.

1 7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the first switching device

2 includes an application-specific integrated circuit.

1 8.   A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an

2 information carrier, the computer program product being

3 operable to cause a machine to:

4   receive on a first switching device a message from a

5   second switching device that indicates to slow packet

6   transmission to the second switching device.

1 9.   The computer program product of claim 8 being further

2 operable to cause a machine to:

3   slow packet transmission from the first switching

4   device to a congested port in the second switching

5   device.

1 10. The computer program product of claim 8 being further

2 operable to cause a machine wherein the message identifies a

3 congested port in the second switching device.

1 11. The computer program product of claim 8 wherein the

2 message identifies a port in the first switching device

3 transmitting packets to a congested port in the second

4 switching device.

1   12. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an

2   information carrier, the computer program product being

3   operable to cause a machine to:

4   transmit from a first switching device to a second

5   switching device a message that indicates to slow packet

6   transmission to the first switching device.

1   13. The computer program product of claim 12 being further

2   operable to cause a machine to:

3   transmit the message from the second switching

4   device to a third switching device.

1   14. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the

2   first switching device includes an application-specific

3   integrated circuit.

1   15. A message manager comprises:

2   a process to receive on a first switching device a

3   message from a second switching device that indicates to

4   slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

1   16. The message manager of claim 15 further comprising:

2   a process to transmit from the first switching

3   device to the second switching device a message that

4   indicates to slow packet transmission to the first

5   switching device.

1   17.   The message manager of claim 15 wherein the message

2   identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

1   18.   A system comprising:

2   a first switching device capable of,

3   receiving a message from a second switching

4   device that indicates to slow packet transmission to

5   the second switching device.

1   19.   The system of claim 18 wherein the first switching device

2   is further capable of:

3   transmitting to the second switching device a

4   message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the

5   first switching device.

1   20.   The system of claim 18 wherein the message identifies a

2   congested port in the second switching device.

1   21.   A packet forwarding device comprising:

2   an input port for receiving a packet;

3   an output port for delivering the received packet;

4   and

5   a first switching device capable of,

6   receiving a message from a second switching

7   device that indicates to slow packet transmission to

8   the second switching device.

1   22.   The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the

2   first switching device is further capable of:

3   transmitting to the second switching device a

4   message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the

5   first switching device.

1   23.   The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the

2   message identifies a congested port in the second switching

3   device.

1   24.   A network switch comprising:

2   a first application-specific integrated circuit

3   (ASIC) capable of receiving a message from a second ASIC

4   that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second

5   ASIC.

1   25.   The network switch of claim 24 wherein the first ASIC is

2   capable of transmitting to the ASIC a message that indicates

3   to slow packet transmission to the first ASIC.

1   26.   The network switch of claim 24 wherein the message

2   identifies a congested port in the second ASIC.